

PEER REVIEW REPORTS

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What was the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on human resource management and work? An integrative literature review.

Presti, M. J., Mendes, D. C. (2023) What was the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on human resource management and work? An integrative literature review. *RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 63(6). e2022-0483. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020230604>

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PEER REVIEW REPORT

Peer review report for:

Presti, M. J., Mendes, D. C. (2023) What was the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on human resource management and work? An integrative literature review. *RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 63(6). e2022-0483. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020230604>

Disclaimer: The content of the Peer Review Report is the full copy of reviewers and authors' reports. Typing and punctuation errors are not edited.

Reviewer:

Lydia Murillo Ramos , Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Department of Business Administration, Madrid, Spain. The second reviewer did not authorize the disclosure of his/her identity and peer review report.

ROUND 1

Reviewer 1 Report

Reviewer: Lydia Murillo Ramos

Date review returned: 19-Sep-2022

Recomendation: Major revision

Please state any conflict(s) of interest that you have in relation to the review of this paper (state "none" if this is not applicable).

none

Comments to the Author

I appreciate the efforts of the authors in exploring the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on HRM. I have the following suggestions for improving the quality of the overall manuscript.

Abstract (p. 2): The information contained in the abstract written in Spanish does not fully coincide with that contained in the abstract written in English. Please check the part where the categories are indicated, as well as the sentence where the results are described.

Introduction section (5th paragraph, p.3): The overall objective requires a stronger justification (not only based on the current relevance and impact of this research topic). I think it is important to include some recent citation(s) of a research gap(s) that this paper will help to fill. On the other hand, to help the reader have a good understanding of the issues to be addressed in this study. It would be convenient to include in the introduction the specific research objectives or research questions to be answered and not only specify the general objective "this integrative review aimed to understand how the literature addressed the pandemic's impacts on work and HRM". These are not visible until you get to the methodology section. Likewise, before the paragraph detailing how this systematic review is structured, I missed a text entry explaining the contribution(s) of this work. The aforementioned clear statement of the objectives of the work may also help to better identify the contribution(s) made.

Methodological procedures section (6th paragraph, p.6): First of all, I would like to congratulate the authors for having made the enormous effort of looking at several bibliographic databases simultaneously. However, I recommend that the paper should better justify why this research string was used to extract the articles, rather than a more comprehensive one that would include more synonyms for human resource management, pandemic, and work or telework. In order to ensure that all articles relevant to this study are included. Some examples are personnel management, HRM, human resource policies, human resource practices, and even some of the human resource practices that have been described in the article by alluding to the classification made by Dutra et al. (2017). Referring to the other fields of study, possible synonyms that could have been incorporated into the search are remote work and job, among others.

Methodological procedures section (7th paragraph, p.6): I think you have done very well to use the appropriate English/Portuguese terms to refer to the keyword “human resource management”. Now, if the translation of human resource management is “gestão de pessoas”. I wonder why only the keyword “gestão” was retained in the search (as shown in Figure 3).

Results and discussion section (3rd paragraph, p.9): It is in the first part of the paper that the word “workers” alone appears and not “work” which has a broader meaning in my view. I recommend always using the same name to designate this category throughout the text.

Results and discussion section (pp.9-16):

- *There is a clear interaction between the three proposed categories, which sometimes overlap because, ultimately, what affects work ends up influencing workers and this undoubtedly has an impact on HRM processes and the organization. I would propose establishing a clear differentiation between the impacts that have more to do with individual aspects (at the employee level) and those that occur at the organizational level. To this end, I consider it necessary that the structure of the results and discussion section be revised.*
- *In reading this section, I have found that perhaps the most logical order in which to present the results is to go from the most particular to the most general. First, explain the effect of the pandemic on work and workers, followed by the effect of the pandemic on HRM, and finally the impacts at the organizational level. Furthermore, I believe that this proposal is in line with what the authors indicated at the end of the section on ‘The pandemic’s effect on work and workers’: “Given the above, it was possible to observe a complex interaction of factors that affected performance and well-being inside and outside the workplace during the pandemic, with relevant consequences for organizations and HRM practices”. (p. 14)*
- *Sub-heading “Effects of the pandemic on organizations” (4th paragraph, p.9): With regard to the following sentence included in the document, “With less revenue, many opted for layoffs, temporary suspensions, or relocations to reduce short-term costs and manage their financial (Dwomoh et al., 2020; Gonçalves et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2021).” Please specify what is meant by the term ‘manage their financial’.*
- *Sub-heading “Effects of the pandemic on organizations” (7th paragraph, p.10): I don’t understand the following sentence correctly, I think if it were expressed differently it might help to understand it better. “In line with this, Kutieshat and Farmanesh (2022) cited organizational innovation as a mediator between the difficulties caused by the pandemic, especially concerning new HRM practices that produce organizational values such as responsibility, creativity, autonomy, and participation.”*
- *Sub-heading “Effects of the pandemic on organizations” (8th paragraph, p.10): I recommend shortening the*

following sentence to make it easier to read. “Indeed, Aguinis et al. (2020) demonstrated how certain corporations that adopted responsible practices during the pandemic had improved individual and organizational performance, while others failed because of the mismatch between the proffered organizational culture and the policies actually put into practice, such as insisting on continuing operations despite employees’ lack of health safety.”

- Sub-heading “The pandemic’s effects on HRM” (3rd paragraph, p. 15): I recommend shortening the following sentence to make it easier to read. “Given this scenario, HRM also had to modify its training structures, directing the development of professional skills - such as those focused on digitalization, collaboration, and remote communication - and psychological skills – such as resilience and mindfulness courses, initiatives to combat stress, and the encouragement of therapy (Chen, 2021; Zacher & Rudolph, 2022).”
- Sub-heading “The pandemic’s effects on HRM” (5th paragraph, p. 15-16): I think it is very important to point out how and in what way performance management or appraisal systems as well as compensation and rewards programs have been affected by the pandemic. Not only to indicate that they have had to adapt and the direct consequences of this.
- Sub-heading “The pandemic’s effects on HRM” (7th paragraph, p. 16): It would be very interesting to point out how and in what way the implementation of sustainable HRM practices could improve these qualities of employees (adaptability and resilience). It would also be useful to explain in more detail the positive impact from an economic point of view and not just mention that it “might even reduce costs”.

Final considerations section (pp. 17-18):

- The contribution and originality of the study must be better defended.
- Instead of using the “Final Considerations” section to give a brief summary of what was previously discussed in the “Results and Discussion” section. It is important to make a greater effort to bring out the contribution of this work. Also, I consider that since the information presented here has already been explained in some way throughout the paper, it may be more interesting to propose from the literature that has been analyzed what are the potential future lines of research extracted in each of the thematic categories created: organization, HRM and work & workers. This attempt is made at the end of this section, but I consider that it would be interesting to give it more prominence, as it can undoubtedly be of great help in advancing this field of knowledge.
- It is very good that the authors have reflected on the theoretical implications of the work. However, I believe that the issue of sustainable human resource management, since it has not been addressed in such depth, could be reflected upon as a possible future line of research. Indeed, as the text points out, the pandemic has opened up the debate on the effectiveness of sustainable human resource practices.
- To clarify these two points, with regard to suggestions for future research work: “geographic conditions comparing different global HRM responses” and “persistent consequences”.

Format issues:

- In the ‘Human resources in the pandemic’ section, rewrite the paragraph that begins “Regarding organizational contingencies to the pandemic...” (5th paragraph, p.5). The sentence is very long, and this may impair the smooth reading of the document. I recommend structuring it differently so that it reads better without losing its meaning.

- In the ‘Methodological procedures section’ (7th paragraph, p.6): Clarify the sentence “The Boolean operators (“AND”, “OR”, “E”, and “OU”)”, As these Boolean operators are the equivalent of “AND” and “OR” but expressed in Portuguese. I would write it differently because without looking at the figure it seems that they are different ones and this generates confusion.
- Avoid using words in italics if the rest of the document does not follow the same line. Specifically, the words I have found throughout the text that appear in this way are: *performance* (p.8); *corpus* (p.8 and 15); *mindfulness* (p.15)
- References could be seen more clearly if a french indent is applied (following the formatting instructions provided by the journal).
- In figure 2 (p.24), it is important to merge the cells so that there is no empty space.
- In figure 6 (p. 26), the title of the chart should be more specific. For example, “Number of publications per journal research area”.
- Typographical errors: In table 1, the keyword “support” is misspelled.

Reviewer 2 Report

Reviewer 2 did not authorize the disclosure of his/her identity and peer review report.

ROUND 2

Reviewer 1 Report

Reviewer: Francisco Giovanni David Vieira

Date review returned: 24-Nov-2022

Recomendation: Minor revision

Please state any conflict(s) of interest that you have in relation to the review of this paper (state “none” if this is not applicable).

Nenhum

Comments to the Author

I appreciate the efforts of the authors for carefully going through all the aspects that were indicated previously. I have the following suggestions for improving the quality of the overall manuscript.

Abstract (p.1):

- a. Here, the abbreviation “SHRM” is the first time that it appears in the document, so it needs to appear with the full name (i.e. Sustainable Human Resource Management “SHRM”)
- b. In this context, for me it is not clear what you mean by the expression “integrative review”: In terms of considering different perspectives (Global North and South); the use of multiple sources to collect bibliographic data; or the integration of articles that deal with the effects of The Covid-19 pandemic on work & workers, HRM and organizations. Please, clarify this concept to avoid its interpretation as a buzzword.

c. Very good for including some specific findings with impact inside the abstract. But, I would recommend the authors rewrite the following sentence: “The pandemic gave rise to a new recruitment and professional archetype centered on labor and behavioral skills adaptable to remote work during and after the crisis”, to achieve a more precise, clear, and appealing phrase.

Important: Please, apply the undertaken changes to the Spanish and Portuguese (Brazilian) abstracts. This sentence also appears in the “Final Considerations” section, so apply the same changes there.

d. In the Spanish abstract that has resulted from the modifications applied, please consider adopting the following changes to ensure better readability:

“Este estudio busca comprender...” (instead of “buscó”)

Substitute “vacíos en la literatura” for “lagunas de investigación”..

In the sentence “se observaron grandes disparidades en las evaluaciones del teletrabajo”. I recommend to substitute “disparidades” for “discrepancias” that appear to fit better with the context. It also seems to be a word missing to understand what was evaluated regarding telework. For instance, “se observaron grandes discrepancias en las evaluaciones acerca de la utilidad del teletrabajo” (the word can be utility which in Spanish is “utilidad” or any other that make sense in this context).

Introduction section (pp. 3-4): It is great that you have included more information to make clear the literature gap that you are trying to cover and the theoretical contributions of this study. What’s more, I think that by including the research questions in this section, you have brought light to the objectives of this inquiry and provided useful guidance on the topics that are addressed throughout the article. However, let me just suggest you a few changes:

a. In the sentence “Due to the pandemic’s global impacts, it is necessary to aggregate the collective academic knowledge from multiple sources to integrate similarities, differences, and gaps in the literature.”, I would specify that the sources you are referring to are “bibliographic”, and instead of the word integrate I would either use “examine or analyse”. The result will be, “Due to the pandemic’s global impacts, it is necessary to aggregate the collective academic knowledge from multiple bibliographic sources to examine similarities, differences, and to identify (potential) literature gaps”

b. To try to be as precise as possible when detailing the theoretical contribution of your work, I suggest you to include the following words that I have marked by putting them within brackets.

“By studying the pandemic and its consequences (on working procedures), we can (re)think about HRM and the challenges that may arise in future practices.”

c. In the first and second research questions I consider that the word “the” prior to the word “studies” is unnecessary, and I suggest making some modifications like the ones presented below within parenthesis (please, use the words that you consider more appropriate, these are just suggestions):

RQ1: How did (organization-based literature) address the pandemic’s impacts on work (and workers)?

RQ2: How did (organization-based literature) address the pandemic’s impacts on HRM?

RQ3: How did (organization-based literature) address the pandemic’s impacts on organizations?

Regarding the third research question proposed “What were the main dialogue points and/or divergences among the selected articles?”, I would recommend changing it to the one indicated above or another that refers to the third

thematic category explored. In the “Results and Discussion”, we can find the main ideas and subcategories that have been extracted from the review of the final sample of documents regarding the following three thematic categories: effects of the pandemic on work and workers, HRM and organizations. However, we do not find any table or matrix where we can observe an analysis of the convergence and divergence points between the different articles.

Methodological procedures section (pp. 6-9): I appreciate a lot the efforts that you have made to justify the reasons behind the decision of using this study’s research string. Nonetheless, this is going to be one of the main limitations of your study, because these decisions have affected your results (although not severely), and it should be reflected as such in the paragraph of limitations that you have contemplated in the “Final considerations” section.

I understand the fact that the simultaneous use of different bibliographic databases and the search of articles in different languages have driven your decision to maintain the search as simply as possible. However, in my opinion, there are things that still require consideration and others that might need to be explained differently to avoid misleading conclusions:

- a. Database limitations and the databases used different search methodologies. What does this exactly mean?*
- b. The general concept “Gestão” was used instead of “Gestão de pessoas” as a synonym of human resource management, to get a larger number of outcomes. Nonetheless, from your explanation, “Gestão” and “human resource management” carry different semantic applications, therefore this reasoning leads you to think that they cannot be used as substitutes for each other. Moreover, one of the concerns that I have with the use of “gestão” is the wide scope of this keyword. Don’t you think that this may have brought a lot of noise, and for that reason, you found that 264 articles were not fitting the subject under study?*
- c. Moreover, by including the sentence “test searches with synonyms yielded similar results”, you are proving that this work could have been done despite the limitations mentioned.*

Final considerations section (pp. 19-20): Good job, I like how this part of the article has been enriched with the provision of some potential future research lines derived from your findings that undoubtedly can help this knowledge field to advance. I would just like to make one point, it would be great if you can be more specific and precise, regarding the practical implications signalled. For instance, some considerations are shown below:

“the discussions presented can be used to subsidize (what do you mean by subsidize?) the (re)construction of management policies and techniques in different organizations (what is the direction to follow based on your conclusions?)”;

“Considering socio-economic discrepancies (what type?), these discussions may promote a more human perspective on HRM and endorse the remote/hybrid modality as a possible labor alternative”

Reviewer 2 Report

Reviewer 2 did not authorize the disclosure of his/her identity and peer review report.